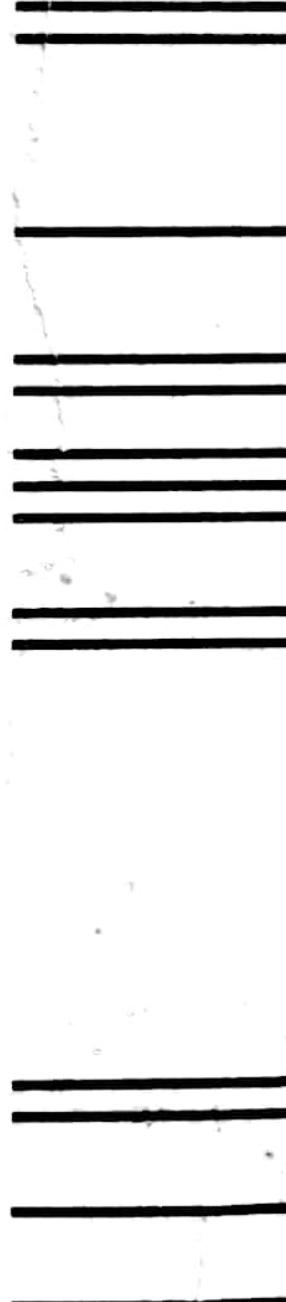


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# GRAMMAR FOR GROWN-UPS

A painless &  
practical guide to the  
English language



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# **GRAMMAR FOR GROWN-UPS**

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# **GRAMMAR IS FOR GROWN-UPS**

**You're out of school and living in the real world.  
Why should you bother to study grammar?**

**Believe it or not, a clear-cut knowledge of the ins and outs of grammar can be an asset to you even in your personal life. After all, you *do* want to let your family and friends know what you are thinking and feeling, you want to make plans with them, and you want to avoid misunderstandings. In short, you want to communicate clearly—and to do that, you have to use language correctly. Grammar shows you how.**

**In business it's an absolute necessity for you to be precise and competent in your use of language. Grammatical errors, whether in telephone conversations, written reports, or meetings, are looked upon as almost unpardonable. If you want to move ahead in the business world, *now* is the time to brush up on your grammar.**

This book is a refresher course on the essentials of grammar—to help you avoid grammatical slips of the tongue and pen, and to help you speak and write more clearly and effectively.

This book is *not* a college-level textbook—or a third-grade primer. It's written from the viewpoint that grammar, like any logical system that works in the real world, is basically simple—and can even be fun.

Grammar doesn't have to be everything you always hated in school. Think of it as a game: the object of the game is to communicate. To play it, everyone has to follow the same rules of the language. This book is designed so that you can learn those rules quickly and painlessly.

Read the book at home, or take it along with you on the train or bus—and don't forget a pencil. The simple read-and-learn explanations, along with the Test-Yourself exercises, will encourage you to put language to good use in speaking and writing. And remember—there's no need to rush. A few minutes a day with this book is all you need. Learn at your own rate, and enjoy the benefits of a valuable new skill.

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# PARTS OF SPEECH

No doubt you've heard of these before. You know they're categories of words. You may even be able to name all eight categories: noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb, preposition, conjunction, and interjection. But in referring to the "parts of speech," what do we really mean?

To begin with, words are categorized as parts of speech according to the ways they're used in sentences. Take the word *light*. You could say, "In winter, the *light* slants and makes long shadows." Here *light* is used as a noun. Or you could say, "She wore a *light* coat." Here *light* is used as an adjective. Or, "I'm going to *light* the candles." Here *light* is used as a verb.

Each part of speech is explained in detail on the following pages. For the moment, if you think of words as actors and actresses, you can think of the parts of speech as the roles words play.

And as you can see by the example of the word *light*, not all words are typecast. In one sentence a word can play one part, and in another sentence the same word can play another part.

Bear in mind that in every sentence, every word is a part of speech. After all, no word can act in a sentence without a role. Take for example this sentence: *Alas, the ill-tempered rhinoceros is turning around and galloping straight toward me.* Here the word *alas* is an interjection, *the ill-tempered*—both words—are adjectives, *rhinoceros* is a noun, *is turning* and *galloping* are verbs, *around* and *straight* are adverbs, *and* is a conjunction, *toward* is a preposition, and *me* is a pronoun. (Not every sentence includes all eight parts of speech, but that one does.)

But do you really need to know about the parts of speech? What's the point? Well, the point of using language correctly is to express your thoughts clearly. And the art of using language correctly—grammar—boils down to one basic idea: A thought is expressed in a sentence. To make a sentence, you need words; so your first step in brushing up on your grammar is to learn the eight ways to use words to make a sentence.

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## NOUNS

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Look around. What do you see? Unless you're alone, you see at least one other *person*. Wherever you are, you also see a *place*. And you probably see—as well as hear and feel, perhaps smell and even taste—countless *things*. Meanwhile, you may be remembering the old *definition* of a *noun* as the *name* of a *person*, *place*, or *thing*. Or you may have a *feeling* that too many *words* in this *paragraph* are printed in *italics*, but you're prompted to keep reading by the *thought* that you'd better brush up on your *grammar*.

All the italicized words in the above paragraph are nouns. Note that they're like identification tags; you couldn't make any sense out of the paragraph without them. Nouns identify what's being talked about. Every noun is the name of an object or an idea.

### Common Nouns

A *common noun* is the general name of an object or an idea. A station wagon has a brand name and may even have a pet name, but the common noun that names it is *station wagon*.

A common noun never begins with a capital letter unless it's the first word in a sentence. Here's a list of various common nouns.

parakeet	university	spouse
coffee	cousin	yacht
music	twilight	award
patio	botany	fragrance
doctor	ashtray	space
diet	jackpot	competition
bridge	fashion	silverware
stopwatch	corkscrew	gratitude

### Proper Nouns

A *proper noun* is the name of a particular object or idea. It always begins with a capital letter. Here's a list of various proper nouns.

Helen	Academy Award
Egypt	Aunt Veronica
Burgundy	Dr. Livingston
Old Glory	Fifth Amendment
Milky Way	Weight Watchers
Joe's Diner	Cornell University
Mrs. Robinson	Golden Gate Bridge
Sierra Club	Fourth of July
Freudianism	Gulf of Mexico

## **Test Yourself**

In the sentences below, underline the common nouns and circle the proper nouns.

1. Ellen bought a notebook, pen and pencil.
2. The Rangers beat the Hawks.
3. Al belongs to the Bumbling Bowling League.
4. Mexico and Guatemala are on the itinerary.
5. Introduce Harold to Harriet.
6. In this district, the Republicans are winning.
7. The workshop is in the basement.
8. "Don't forget the key," said Mr. Evans.
9. Summer is going to be mild this year.
10. Take the car to Pete's Garage.

*(Answers are on page 62.)*

## Noun Forms

Most nouns have several forms. The basic form is *singular* (referring to one object or idea). The other forms are *plural* (referring to more than one) and *possessive* (showing ownership).

As a rule, you can form the plural of a noun by adding *s* or *es*. (Add *es* to a word that needs an extra syllable for you to hear the added *s*.)

one *film*—two *films*

a *batch*—fifty *batches*

*Ed Jones* and *Irma Jones*—the *Joneses*

But this is only a general rule! That means there are exceptions galore—and there's no short, sweet rule for all the exceptions. If you're not sure of the plural form of a common noun, look up the word in a good dictionary.

As a rule, you can form the possessive of a noun by adding '*s*'—and the possessive of a plural noun ending in *s* by adding an apostrophe only.

*parent*—*parent's* joy

*parents*—*parents'* joy

What about singular nouns ending in *s*? Which is correct, for example—"Charles' cassette re-

corder" or "Charles's cassette recorder"? Actually, you can use either form. But when a singular noun ends in *s*, it's usually preferable to form the possessive with an apostrophe only.

There is another way to form a possessive; instead of saying "the sky's color," for example, you can say "the color of the sky." The "of" phrase is commonly used to form the possessive of the name of an inanimate object or idea.

## **Test Yourself**

In each space in the sentences below, write the name *Adams* in one of four forms: singular, plural, singular possessive, or plural possessive. (Answers are on page 62.)

be called the \_\_\_\_\_.<sup>(2)</sup> One

of the \_\_\_\_\_ children  
(3)

was the sixth president of the U.S.; his father

**administration followed George Washington's.**

## PRONOUNS

As Evelyn was walking down the street, Evelyn met a friend of Evelyn's named Al. "Hi, Evelyn," Al said. "Fancy meeting Evelyn here." Evelyn told Al that Evelyn wasn't surprised to see Al, since Evelyn was on Evelyn's way home from a visit with Al's family.

That's what everyday speech would sound like without pronouns. Here's the same paragraph—with pronouns (italicized) replacing nouns:

As Evelyn was walking down the street, *she* met a friend of *hers* named Al. "Hi, Evelyn," *he* said. "Fancy meeting *you* here." *She* told *him* that *she* wasn't surprised to see *him*, since *she* was on *her* way home from a visit with *his* family.

A pronoun is a word that takes the place of a noun. There are many pronouns—*who*, *what*, *which*, *this*, *that*, *any*, *one*, etc. But the most important pronouns—the ones presented on the following pages—are *personal pronouns*. These include the pronouns in the preceding paragraph. All personal pronouns are common little words.

In grammar they are categorized four ways—according to *person*, *number*, *gender* and *case*.

### **Person**

In the *first person*, a pronoun refers to the person who is speaking. *I*, *me*, *my*, *mine*, *we*, *us*, *our* and *ours* are first-person pronouns.

In the *second person*, a pronoun refers to the person who is spoken to. The words *you*, *your* and *yours* are second-person pronouns.

In the *third person*, a pronoun refers to a person or thing that is spoken about. The words *he*, *him*, *his*, *she*, *her*, *hers*, *it*, *its*, *they*, *them*, *their* and *theirs* are third-person pronouns.

### **Number**

In number, a pronoun is either *singular* or *plural*, referring to one or more.

The personal pronouns *I*, *me*, *my*, *mine*, *he*, *him*, *his*, *she*, *her*, *hers*, *it* and *its* are singular.

The personal pronouns *we*, *us*, *our*, *ours*, *they*, *them*, *their* and *theirs* are plural.

The personal pronouns *you*, *your* and *yours* can be either singular or plural.

## **Gender**

In gender, a pronoun is *masculine*, *feminine*, *common* (referring to either sex) or *neuter* (not referring to either sex).

The masculine pronouns are *he*, *him* and *his*, and the feminine pronouns are *she*, *her* and *hers*.

First-person and second-person pronouns are all common in gender; the pronouns *it* and *its* are neuter. The pronouns *they*, *them*, *their* or *theirs* are either common or neuter.

## **Case**

In the *subjective case*, a pronoun stands for a *subject*, i.e., what's being talked about (see also p. 28 and p. 41). The subjective personal pronouns are *I*, *we*, *you*, *he*, *she*, *it* and *they*.

In the *objective case*, a pronoun stands for an *object*, i.e., what is acted on by the subject or connected to the sentence by a preposition (see pp. 49-50, 35). The objective personal pronouns are *me*, *us*, *you*, *him*, *her*, *it* and *them*.

In the *possessive case*, a pronoun shows ownership. The possessive personal pronouns are *my*, *mine*, *our*, *ours*, *your*, *yours*, *his*, *her*, *hers*, *its*, *their* and *theirs*.

## Antecedents

“The rules make more sense than I thought it did.” If you have a feeling that something is wrong with that sentence, you’re right. The pronoun *it* doesn’t agree with its antecedent, *rules*.

An *antecedent* is the noun that a pronoun stands for. In the sentence, “Marlene missed the bus and was late for her appointment,” the noun *Marlene* is the antecedent of the pronoun *her*. “Brian missed the bus, too. But he wasn’t in a hurry.” In those two sentences, the noun *Brian* is the antecedent of the pronoun *he*.

A pronoun may not have an antecedent, but watch out! It often has one—perhaps in the same sentence with the pronoun, or in a preceding sentence. And there’s a rule about pronouns and antecedents: *A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in person, number and gender.*

In that funny-sounding sentence, “The rules make more sense than I thought it did,” *it* doesn’t agree with *rules* in number. The correct pronoun to use is a plural one—*they*. Here’s the sentence again—sounding all right this time: “The rules make more sense than I thought they did.”

## **Subjective or Objective?**

“This book belongs to Gail and I.” Something’s wrong with that sentence, too. The subjective pronoun *I* is being used in the wrong case.

Using pronouns in the wrong case is an error you can avoid by faithfully following this rule:

Use subjective pronouns only in reference to subjects, and use objective pronouns only in reference to objects.

Obviously, you wouldn’t say, “This book belongs to I.” Why not? Because the sentence is about “this book.” The owner of the book is not a *subject* in that sentence, but an *object*, and you would use the objective pronoun *me*.

Well, if the book also belongs to Gail, the pronoun you should still use is *me*—unless you change the structure of the sentence. You should say, “This book belongs to Gail and me”—or, if you’d rather talk about Gail and yourself, you should say, “Gail and I own this book.”

## **Test Yourself**

On the next page, rewrite the sentences by replacing the italicized words with pronouns.

1. *Aunt Jill met Mr. and Mrs. Smith.*

---

2. *What did your son think of the movie?*

---

3. *Where's Juanita's dog?*

---

4. *Bill's parents want to go home.*

---

5. *Don't step on the cat's tail.*

---

6. *Chad and I are friends of Pat and Ann's.*

---

*(Answers are on page 62.)*

---

## ADJECTIVES

---

All right, take a breather. Adjectives are much easier to understand than pronouns. They don't take the place of nouns, and they don't change form according to person or number or gender or case. (Whew!) All they do is describe nouns (and pronouns). Note how they do it here:

*red roses*

*a complicated computer*

*the disappointed debutante*

*one other*

*three new magazines*

*long, interesting lectures*

An adjective is perfectly easy to spot when it's placed directly in front of a noun, as adjectives often are. But an adjective can be placed elsewhere in a sentence—which is when you might have to think about it a little.

Your work is *brilliant*.

*Sad* am I.

In the first sentence, *brilliant* describes the noun *work*. In the second sentence, *sad* describes the pronoun *I*.

Most adjectives do change form—but only for *comparison*. There are three forms for comparison, as shown in these examples:

- 1) *tall, gorgeous (positive)*
- 2) *taller, more gorgeous (comparative)*
- 3) *tallest, most gorgeous (superlative)*

The basic form of adjectives is the *positive*. You can form the *comparative* by adding *er* or the word *more* to the positive, and you can form the *superlative* by adding *est* or the word *most* to the positive. (A few adjectives change form irregularly; e.g., *good—better—best* and *bad—worse—worst*. Watch out for these.)

An adjective may simply be a number—or it may simply be an *article*. There are only three articles: the words *a, an* and *the*.

Some pronouns can be used as adjectives. The pronoun *another*, for example, is used as an adjective in the sentence, “Tomorrow is another day.” Nouns can be used as adjectives, too. The word *baby* is a noun, but you’re using it as an adjective when you talk about “a baby boy” or “a baby girl.” Remember—an adjective is a word that describes a noun or a pronoun.

## **Test Yourself**

**Circle the adjectives in the sentences below.**

1. He was wearing a red-polka-dot tie.
2. Buy the largest avocado you can find.
3. She was unconscious.
4. Meg made herself a green silk blouse.
5. Three calls were placed by Mr. Lee.
6. This bridge has more impressive girders than  
the last one we crossed.
7. Purple sunsets are an everyday occurrence in  
New Mexico.
8. I'd settle for that, but this is better.
9. Her baby's face was fat and dimpled.

*(Answers are on page 63.)*

---

## VERBS

---

*Look around. What do you see?* Unless you're alone, you *see* at least one other person. Wherever you *are*, you also *see* a place. And you probably *see*—as well as *hear* and *feel*, perhaps *smell* and even *taste*—countless things. Meanwhile, you *may notice* that if the italicized words in this paragraph *were omitted*, you *couldn't even begin to understand* the paragraph.

All the italicized words in the above paragraph are verbs. Note that they express either action or a state of being—and that every sentence in that paragraph has at least one verb.

In fact, if a sentence doesn't have a verb, it's not a sentence. In order to form a sentence, you must express an action or a state of being—and a verb will do it for you. To put it simply, a verb *tells* what a noun or pronoun *does* or *is*.

Being the dynamic words they are, verbs can take many forms. It's impossible to explain all the forms in a book this size, but we can give you a general idea of them.

## Tense

The tense of a verb tells when the action or the state of being occurs—in the *present*, in the *past*, or in the *future*.

Stephen *plays* the cello. (*present tense*)

Stephen *played* the cello. (*past tense*)

Stephen *will play* the cello. (*future tense*)

I *am* bored today. (*present tense*)

I *was* bored yesterday. (*past tense*)

I *will be* bored tomorrow. (*future tense*)

A *perfect tense* is one in which an action or a state of being has been completed—in the *present*, in the *past*, or in the *future*.

Sharon *has written* a story.

(*present perfect tense*)

Sharon *had written* a story.

(*past perfect tense*)

Sharon *will have written* a story.

(*future perfect tense*)

I *have been* abroad. (*present perfect tense*)

I *had been* abroad before last year.

(*past perfect tense*)

I *will have been* abroad after next year.

(*future perfect tense*)

## **Person and Number**

All verbs, when connected to nouns or pronouns, have *person* and *number* (see page 12). But only one verb takes first-, second- and third-person forms, as well as singular and plural forms (in present and past tenses). This is the verb *be* (see page 25). The other verbs do not change forms according to person and number—except in the third-person singular (present tense).

I, you, we, they *make*  
he, she, it *makes*

I, you, we, they *do*  
he, she, it *does*

Most verbs have an added *s* or *es* in the third-person singular (present tense). Only certain auxiliary verbs (see p. 24) remain the same in all persons, singular or plural. The verb *have* changes in the third person singular (present tense), but not as the other verbs do:

I, you, we, they *have*  
he, she, it *has*

## **Infinitive**

The basic form of a verb is the *infinitive*. In this form a verb does not have tense, person or num-

ber. The infinitive is easy to spot when preceded by the word *to*, as it usually is.

to be	to make	to play
to do	to spot	to write
to have	to jog	to understand

## Participles

When you add *ing* to a verb, it becomes a *present participle*. The present participle of *play* is *playing*, of *jog* is *jogging*, of *write* is *writing*, of *understand* is *understanding*, etc.

The *past participle* of a verb is the verb form used in the perfect tense. Often this is the same as the verb in the simple past tense; the past participle of *play*, for example, is *played*, which is also *play* in the simple past tense. But many verbs are not so regular; that is, you can't change them to the past tense just by adding *ed*. The verb *write*, for example, becomes *wrote* in the past tense. So the past participle of *write* is *written*.

If you're not sure what the past participle of a verb is, you'll probably find it listed with the verb in a good dictionary.

## Auxiliary Verbs

A verb can be one word—such as *laugh*. Or it can be a few words—such as *would have laughed*. Here the word *laughed* (the past participle of *laugh*) is the main verb, and the words *would have* are auxiliary verbs.

An auxiliary verb is a helping word. It helps to express a main verb in a sense other than the simple present or past tenses. It is often used with present or past participles.

The verbs *be*, *have* and *do* are often used as auxiliary verbs. The verbs *can* (past tense *could*), *may* (past tense *might*), *shall* (past tense *should*), *will* (past tense *would*), *must* and *ought* are always used as auxiliary verbs.

*did* see  
*can* think  
*is* dancing  
*ought* to do  
*must* correct

*might have won*  
*had been planning*  
*should have known*  
*would have believed*  
*will be happening*

## Contractions

A verb can be combined with another word to form a single word, with an apostrophe taking

the place of missing letters in either of the original two words. This is a *contraction*.

*can not*—can't

*let us*—let's

*we have*—we've

*you will*—you'll

There are many other contractions—*I'm*, *you're*, *it's*, etc. (Do not confuse *it's*, which means *it is*, with the pronoun *its*—or *you're* with *your*, or *they're* with *their* or *there*.)

### **Conjugation of the Verb BE**

A conjugation is a listing of the forms of a verb.

*Infinitive: to be*

*Participles: being (present), been (past)*

*Tenses:*

*Present—I am, you are, he, she, it is  
                  we, you, they are*

*Past—I was, you were, he, she, it was  
                  we, you, they were*

*Future—will be*

*Present Perfect—have been  
                  third person singular—has been*

*Past Perfect—had been*

*Future Perfect—will have been*

## **Test Yourself**

Circle the verbs in the sentences below.

1. She swam a mile this morning.
2. What's happening here?
3. Take the children with you.
4. On Tuesday the gym will reopen.
5. You shouldn't have done it.
6. The dog is digging a hole.
7. Mother and I ate dinner together.
8. What are we going to do?
9. All that glitters is not gold.
10. If I'd known what the movie was really  
about, I wouldn't have seen it.

*(Answers are on page 63.)*

## Using Verbs Correctly

The primary function of a verb, as we've said, is to *tell* what a noun or pronoun *does* or *is*. Verbs can have more complicated functions as infinitives or participles, but they can be tricky in their primary forms—creating the most common errors people make in using verbs.

In sentences like “I done well,” “They have shook the world,” and “He could of called me,” the wrong tense forms are used. (Corrected, those sentences should read: “I *did* well,” “They have *shaken* the world,” and “He could *have called* me.”)

Using the wrong tense form is a very common error, and there's only one way to avoid it: Learn the basic six tenses of verbs—and when you're not sure what the past tense or past participle of a verb is, look it up.

In the sentence “It don't matter to me,” the verb *do*—appearing in the contraction *don't*—is used in the right tense (present) but the wrong person and number. The third-person singular pronoun *it* requires a third-person singular verb. (Corrected, the sentence should read: “It *doesn't*

matter to me.'") Using verbs in the wrong person and number is perhaps *the* most common mistake people make with verbs. To avoid it, pay attention to the *subject* of the verb.

When a verb tells what a noun or pronoun does or is, the noun or pronoun is the *subject* of the verb. You could say that as a verb expresses action or a state of being, the subject of the verb *performs* the action or *is in* the state of being.

*Jake* jumps over the hurdle.  
Her *eyes* are pure violet.

In the sentences above, the noun *Jake* is the subject of the verb *jumps*, and the noun *eyes* is the subject of the verb *are*.

Just as a pronoun must agree with its antecedent in person, number and gender, *a verb must agree with its subject in person and number*. In the two sample sentences above, the verb *jumps* agrees with the subject *Jake* (a singular noun used in the third person) and the verb *are* agrees with the subject *eyes* (a plural noun).

A sentence can be much more complicated than the two above, and subject-verb agreement may

not be so obvious. But the trick to subject-verb agreement lies in being able to recognize the subject of the verb, and this will come easier to you as you familiarize yourself with all the parts of speech—as well as with the structure of a sentence (see pp. 39-50).

### Test Yourself

Fill in each blank below with the verb *run* in one of the basic six tenses (see p. 21). (Answers are on page 63.)

Nowadays, she \_\_\_\_\_ to work. She  
(1)

\_\_\_\_\_ to work since last  
(2)

year. Yesterday, she \_\_\_\_\_ home, even  
(3)

though she \_\_\_\_\_ never \_\_\_\_\_  
(4) (4)

home before. She \_\_\_\_\_ home  
(5)

tomorrow, too—making tomorrow the second

time she \_\_\_\_\_ home.  
(6)

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## ADVERBS

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As adjectives describe nouns and pronouns, adverbs describe verbs. Adverbs can describe other parts of speech as well, but let's start with the way they describe verbs:

*She sang sweetly.*

Here the adverb *sweetly* describes the verb *sang*—telling how she sang. Adverbs like *sweetly* are very easy to spot; they are simply adjectives with *ly* added onto them.

<i>Adjective</i>	<i>Adverb</i>
quick	quickly
careful	carefully
happy	happily

Adverbs can tell not only *how* but *when* or *where* (the words *how*, *when* and *where* are often used as adverbs themselves).

*Tom left yesterday.*

*I'll stay home.*

You'll often find an adverb immediately following the verb it describes, as in all the preceding sample sentences. But an adverb, like an adjec-

tive, can be placed in front of the word it describes—or anywhere else in a sentence.

Rita *often* travels to Florida.

I'll *never* go back to that store *again*.

In addition to telling how, when and where, adverbs can refer to cause (*why* is often used as an adverb) and degree (*too* is a common adverb). There are even affirmative and negative adverbs (*yes, no*). The simple negative of a verb is formed with the adverb *not*.

Adverbs can describe, in addition to verbs, other adverbs—and adjectives.

It was the *most radiantly* lovely sunrise we've seen.

Here the adverb *most* describes the adverb *radiantly*, while the adverb *radiantly* describes the adjective *lovely*.

The words *more* and *most* are used—as adverbs—to form the comparative and superlative of many adjectives (see p. 18) as well as some adverbs. A few adverbs take the comparative *er* and superlative *est* endings (e.g., *soon—sooner— soonest*).

## **Test Yourself**

**Underline the adverbs in the sentences below.**

1. The plan worked beautifully.
2. We'll arrive there tomorrow.
3. She began to dance more rapidly.
4. You're exactly right.
5. Come here right now.
6. The animals almost escaped.
7. I'm not very good at this.
8. He'll read his mail later.
9. Why didn't the chairmen realize that the employees might suddenly quit their jobs?
10. They lived happily ever after.

*(Answers are on page 63.)*

---

## PREPOSITIONS

---

These words show relations between other words.  
Some of the most common prepositions are:

among	during	on
at	for	through
beside	from	to
between	in	until
by	of	with

Many of these words can function as other parts of speech—just as certain words that primarily function as other parts of speech (*up, down, out, off, over, under, across*, etc.) can function as prepositions. So how can you tell when a word is functioning as a preposition?

To begin with, you'll almost always find a preposition at the beginning of a *prepositional phrase*. This is a group of words that usually functions like an adjective or an adverb.

*The jet flew to West Africa.*

As you can see, the prepositional phrase *to West Africa* tells where the jet flew; that is, it functions

like an adverb. You could take that phrase out of the sentence and replace it with an adverb: “The jet flew *there*. ”

Of course, you could take the phrase out of the sentence and replace it with nothing. You could say, “The jet flew,” and you’d still be making sense. The phrase *to West Africa* simply tells more about what the jet did.

Usually, a prepositional phrase can be taken out of a sentence without leaving the sentence meaningless; like an adjective or an adverb, it simply tells more. Note how prepositional phrases tell more about these sentences:

*Protein is good for you.*

*A supply of red silk arrived at noon.*

*The man on the dock has seen them.*

*With our luck, we'll go into debt.*

*I don't have time to exercise.*

*At best, it's a silly joke.*

*Think about the other two ideas.*

A prepositional phrase isn’t always “something extra” in a sentence. Occasionally it may function as the subject of a verb (see p. 28), e.g., “*To delay would be risky.*”

But a prepositional phrase always starts with a preposition—and ends with the *object* of the preposition. (This object is usually a noun or a pronoun, although it can be a verb; it can even be an adjective or an adverb.)

Then again, while a preposition is almost always found in a prepositional phrase, it may be found elsewhere. Contrary to an old rule, a sentence may end with a preposition.

But a preposition always has an object—somewhere. And it always relates its object to its *antecedent*—the word or group of words that comes before the preposition.

The jet flew *to* West Africa.

The jet flew to *West Africa*.

Here the preposition is *to*, the object of the preposition is the noun *West Africa*, and the antecedent of the preposition is the verb *flew*.

As you can see in that sample sentence, *to* shows the relation between *West Africa* and *flew*. And that, basically, is how prepositions work. Strictly defined, a preposition is a word that relates its object to its antecedent. Whenever a word per-

forms in a sentence this way, you can be sure that it's a preposition.

### **Test Yourself**

Circle the prepositions in the sentences below.

1. She walked onto the stage.
2. The lights in the left wing flickered.
3. I didn't get home until dawn.
4. During the raid, ten people were arrested.
5. You'll get over it after awhile.

*(Answers are on page 63.)*

---

### **CONJUNCTIONS**

---

These words are much easier to spot than prepositions. Conjunctions don't have objects or antecedents, and their function in sentences is very simple: they connect words, groups of words, or whole sentences. The most commonly used conjunctions are *and*, *or*, *but*.

There are many other conjunctions. Most of them can be used as other parts of speech, but as conjunctions they mainly do the job of connecting.

Dr. Gray is young *and* handsome.

Do you want coffee *or* tea?

Lisa worked hard *but* enjoyed herself.

I'll go *if* they will.

They couldn't tell what it was *because* it was too far away.

*Although* our flight was late, we arrived at the reunion on time.

### **Test Yourself**

Circle the conjunctions in the sentences below.

1. Peaches smell and taste delicious.
2. They were tired, so they fell asleep.
3. Because she had been promoted, she was given a raise in salary.
4. He'll be at the meeting unless he's delayed on his way into the city.

*(Answers are on page 63.)*

---

## INTERJECTIONS

---

Interjections show sudden emotion. Usually, an interjection is independent of the rest of the sentence: the sentence makes sense without it, but the interjection intensifies the sudden feeling expressed. Words like *oh*, *wow*, *alas*, *gosh*, and *hurray* are interjections. Other parts of speech may also be used as interjections.

*Absurd!* We can't possibly go.

*Wow!* He can really dance!

*Alas,* I am alone.

### Test Yourself

In the sentences below, circle the interjections.

1. Grandfather said, "Nonsense! The child stays."
2. Ouch! I just hammered my thumb!
3. The boy said, "Boy, am I tired!"
4. What! Are you sure she said *Tuesday*?

(Answers are on page 64.)

---

# SENTENCE STRUCTURE

In the previous section, we examined sentences word by word to identify each word's role in the play known as *The Sentence*.

Now it's time to look at words in larger groups and in complete sentences to see how all the pieces of the sentence fit together to form a complete thought; that is, how a sentence is *structured*. The following pages discuss sentence components and different sentence types—and even groups of words that aren't sentences at all, but are often mistaken for sentences.

You'll begin to develop *sentence sense*—the ability to tell if a group of words is really a complete sentence and is expressing a complete thought, and to tell what kind of thought is being expressed. This understanding of sentence sense and sentence structure will make your speech and writing more precise and more exciting!

---

## **SENTENCES**

---

A sentence is a group of words that expresses a complete thought. It always begins with a capital letter and ends with a period, question mark or exclamation point.

### **Kinds of Sentences**

There are four kinds of sentences: declarative, interrogative, imperative and exclamatory.

A *declarative sentence* makes a statement. The statement need not be true.

This book is printed in red ink.

An *interrogative sentence* asks a question.

Is the book printed in red ink?

An *imperative sentence* is a command or request.

Print the book in red ink.

An *exclamatory sentence* expresses strong feeling or sudden emotion.

They printed the book in red ink!

## **Parts of a Sentence**

A sentence—whether declarative, interrogative, imperative or exclamatory—always contains a subject and a predicate. Every word in the sentence is either a part of the subject or a part of the predicate.

The *subject* of the sentence is the word or group of words that tells what the sentence is about; that is, who or what is performing the action, or whose state of being is described. The subject always contains a noun, a pronoun or a group of words that acts as a noun.

The *predicate* is the word or group of words that tells what is being said about the subject. The predicate always contains a verb.

The following sentences have been divided into their subjects and predicates. Note that every word is in either the subject or the predicate.

### *Subject*

He

Babies

Baking cookies

My friend Lee

### *Predicate*

is a good driver.

cry.

is fun.

limps.

## **Identifying the Subject and Predicate**

To find the subject and predicate in a *declarative sentence*, first find the verb.

*My uncle eats caviar.*

In the above sentence, the verb is *eats*. Now ask yourself, “Who (or what) eats caviar?” The answer is *uncle*, so *uncle* is the simple subject of the sentence, and *my uncle* is the complete subject of the sentence. The predicate—*eats caviar*—describes the action of the subject.

A sentence may have a *compound subject*, a subject in two or more parts.

*My uncle and aunt eat caviar.*

*My uncle, aunt and cousin eat caviar.*

In the first sentence, *my uncle and aunt* is the compound subject. In the second sentence, *my uncle, aunt and cousin* is the compound subject.

A sentence may have a *compound predicate*, a predicate in two or more parts.

*My uncle eats caviar and drinks champagne.*

*My uncle eats caviar, drinks champagne and smokes cigars.*

Don't confuse sentences that have compound subjects or compound predicates with compound sentences. (See pages 46-47.)

To find the subject and predicate in an *interrogative sentence*, first change the sentence into a declarative sentence.

Can you spare a dime?  
becomes: You can spare a dime.

You is the subject; *can spare a dime* is the predicate in the above sentence.

In *imperative sentences*, the subject is often not there but simply understood. In these sentences, the subject is *you*.

Write often.  
(You) write often.

You is the subject; *write often*, the predicate.

Find the subject and predicate in *exclamatory sentences* as in declarative sentences.

The school is on fire!

*The school* is the subject in the sentence; *is on fire* is the predicate.

## **Test Yourself**

**Locate the subject and predicate in each of the sentences below. Underline the subjects and circle the predicates.**

- 1. Stephen played the part of the hero.**
- 2. She is a dancer.**
- 3. Mary and Ellen are my aunts.**
- 4. Dinner is getting cold.**
- 5. The highway is crowded.**
- 6. Is the door open?**
- 7. We went to the waterfall and ate lunch there.**
- 8. Spring is here.**
- 9. Hide inside.**
- 10. The water is warm.**

*(Answers are on page 64.)*

## CLAUSES

A *clause* is a group of words that contains a subject and predicate. A clause is always a part of a sentence.

If the clause can stand alone as a sentence, it is an *independent clause*. If the clause cannot stand alone as a sentence and is dependent on another part of the sentence, it is a *dependent clause*. In a sentence with an independent clause and a dependent clause, the independent clause always expresses the more important idea.

The following sentence has two independent clauses, connected by the conjunction *and*. Each clause can stand by itself as a sentence.

It was quiet in the office, and I worked all afternoon.

The following sentence has a dependent clause, followed by an independent clause. Only the second clause can stand by itself. It expresses the more important idea. The first clause is dependent on the second clause.

**Because it was quiet in the office, I worked all afternoon.**

The sentence could have been written with the independent clause first.

I worked all afternoon because it was quiet in the office.

### **Sentence Forms**

A sentence that contains only one subject and one predicate is a *simple sentence*.

Sally rewrote the letter.

A simple sentence may have a compound subject or a compound predicate.

*Sally and Mike rewrote the letter.*

*Sally rewrote the letter and mailed it.*

A sentence that contains a dependent clause and an independent clause—either one may come first—is called a *complex sentence*.

**Because the letter had first been written in haste, Sally rewrote it.**

**Sally rewrote the letter because it had first been written in haste.**

The first sentence above is a **complex sentence** with a dependent clause followed by an independent clause. The second is a **complex sentence** with an independent clause followed by a dependent clause.

A sentence that contains two independent clauses is called a *compound sentence*. Don't confuse compound sentences with sentences that have compound subjects or compound predicates.

It was early afternoon, and Ted was on his way to the zoo.

### Test Yourself

Use this key to identify the sentences below.

SS = simple sentence; CD = compound sentence;

CX = complex sentence.

1. He washed, and I dried.

\_\_\_\_\_

2. I washed and dried.

\_\_\_\_\_

3. He and I washed.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. While he washed, I dried.

\_\_\_\_\_

(Answers are on page 64.)

---

## PHRASES

---

A phrase is a group of words without a subject or predicate. Phrases are used as parts of speech and are named for the part they replace.

After dinner is the best time to nap.  
(*After dinner* is a noun phrase.)

They waited under the awning.  
(*Under the awning* is an adverb phrase.)

The boy walking his frog waved.  
(*Walking his frog* is an adjective phrase.)

### Test Yourself

Circle the groups of words that are sentences.

1. In the morning when I get up
2. She broke the glass
3. What do you want me to do
4. Beyond my greatest expectations

(Answers are on page 64.)

---

## OBJECTS

---

An object is a word that receives the action of the subject. An object completes the meaning of the verb. Not all verbs need objects.

A *direct object* receives the action of the subject directly. It answers the question, “Who?” or “What?”

Alvin tossed the *rope*.

Rope is the direct object. It answers the question, “What did Alvin toss?”

An *indirect object* receives the action of the subject indirectly. It answers the question, “To whom?,” “For whom?,” “To what?” or “For what?”

Alvin tossed *Homer* the rope.

Homer is the indirect object. It answers the question, “To whom did Alvin toss the rope?”

A direct object usually follows the verb. An indirect object usually precedes the direct object. An indirect object usually occurs only in sen-

tences that have direct objects. When an indirect object follows the direct object, the preposition *to* or *for* is used before the indirect object.

Alvin tossed the rope to *Homer*.

As we said earlier, not all verbs need objects to complete their meanings. For example,

My grandmother jogs.

Some verbs may or may not take an object, depending on how they are used. For example,

She ran slowly. (*no object*)

She ran the show. (*direct object*)

### Test Yourself

In the sentences below, underline the direct objects and circle the indirect objects.

1. He brought me dinner.
2. Dad returned the dog to its owner.
3. Open the door!
4. The police officer read him his rights.

(Answers are on page 64.)

---

# PUNCTUATION

Punctuation is used to present written material clearly. It gives the reader a chance to pause where necessary, so the ideas in the sentence are understood. The main punctuation marks are:

- |                     |                     |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| • Period            | ' Apostrophe        |
| ! Exclamation Point | ( ) Parentheses     |
| ? Question Mark     | " " Quotation Marks |
| , Comma             | - Hyphen            |
| ; Semicolon         | — Dash              |
| : Colon             |                     |

Learn the basic rules outlined in the following pages and insure that your grammatically-perfect sentences are clearly understood!

---

## **THE PERIOD .**

---

**A period is used to end a declarative or imperative sentence. It indicates a full stop.**

I couldn't sleep last night.

Mail the letter.

**A period is used after abbreviations.**

Mr. Dr. F.B.I. oz.

**If an abbreviation ends a sentence, use only one period, not two.**

He is a student at N.Y.U.

**If an abbreviation ends a question or exclamation, use a period for the abbreviation. Then end the sentence with the necessary question mark or exclamation point.**

Is the U.S.A. a member of the U.N.?

**A period always goes inside the quotation marks.  
(See page 60.)**

She said, "I just don't care."

A period goes inside parentheses if what is inside the parentheses is a complete sentence. If the words inside the parentheses are not a complete sentence, the period goes outside.

**Please get the file on Joe Burns. (He is the painter.)**

**Please get the file on Joe Burns (the painter).**

---

## **THE EXCLAMATION POINT !**

---

An exclamation point is used to show strong feelings, sudden emotion or surprise. It is used after an exclamatory sentence.

**How tall you are!**

An exclamation point goes inside quotation marks or parentheses when it is part of the quoted or parenthetical material.

**Grace yelled, “What a knockout!”**

**Otherwise, the exclamation point goes outside the parentheses.**

**He called me a “prune face”!**

---

## **THE QUESTION MARK ?**

---

**A question mark is used after an interrogative sentence, but not after an indirect question.**

**Are you working late?**

**She asked if I were working late.**

**A question mark is used after a quotation that asks a question.**

**“Are you working late?” she asked.**

**If the quotation itself asks a question, the question mark goes inside the quotation marks. If the sentence is the question, the question mark goes outside the quotation marks.**

**Did she say, “I want you to work late”?**

**If both the quotation and the outside sentence are questions, use a question mark only after the quotation. Do not use two question marks.**

**Did she ask, “Are you working late?”**

**A question mark may be used to turn a declarative sentence into a question.**

He has a new apartment?  
The Turtles won?

---

## THE COMMA ,

---

The comma is used to indicate a pause. It separates various elements in a sentence.

A comma is used to separate words or phrases in a series of three or more. The comma takes the place of *and* or *or*. The word *and* or *or* usually appears before the last element in the series, and the comma before the *and* or *or* is optional.

I bought milk, bread and tomatoes.

I bought milk, bread, and tomatoes.

Eat, drink and be merry!

Eat, drink, and be merry!

We can discuss the problem at home, in the office or in a restaurant.

We can discuss the problem at home, in the office, or in a restaurant.

A comma is used to separate a series of adjectives that modify the same noun or pronoun. Do

not use a comma between the last adjective and the noun or pronoun.

He explored the cold, frozen, white Arctic.

A comma is used to separate the two independent clauses in a compound sentence.

The men walked, and the women rode.

Use a comma to separate the clauses in a complex sentence only when the dependent clause is first.

If you go, I'll go.  
I'll go if you go.

Use commas around a parenthetical expression.

Sylvia, they say, is a born cook.

A comma is used in dates, addresses and in the opening and closing elements of letters.

August 25, 1955  
Saturday, October 16, 1980  
Seattle, Washington  
Dear Mrs. Martin,  
Respectfully yours,

**Use a comma to insure that the sentence is read correctly.**

**They entertained often in the fall, and in the summer, their guests stayed all weekend.**

---

## **THE SEMICOLON ;**

---

**A semicolon indicates a pause that is stronger than a comma but weaker than a period.**

**A semicolon is used to connect two complete sentences that are so closely related in meaning that they should be in one sentence.**

**The cafeteria closes at 4:00; the dining room remains open until 8:00.**

**Central High wins often; Lincoln High usually loses.**

**Use a semicolon instead of a comma to separate items that are especially long, or items that have commas within them.**

**She wore a red, pleated, designer skirt; a white, long-sleeved, designer blouse; and medium-heeled, navy, designer pumps.**

---

## **THE COLON :**

---

**A colon is used to introduce a list of items.**

**Assemble these ingredients: flour, sugar, eggs and milk.**

**A colon is used to introduce a part of the sentence that explains the first part.**

**Alex explained why his wife couldn't come:  
she had the flu.**

**A colon is used to introduce long quotations.**

**Lincoln's Address at Gettysburg begins:  
“Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.”**

**A colon may be used after the salutation in a business letter.**

**Gentlemen:      Dear Sir:**

**A colon separates figures in a time expression.**

## THE APOSTROPHE ’

---

The apostrophe is used in two ways:

- To show possession (see pages 9-10)
  - To form a contraction (see pages 24-25)
- 

## PARENTHESES ( )

---

Parentheses—always used as a set—are used to enclose material that explains the main part of the sentence but is not essential to it. A word, a phrase, a clause or a sentence may be enclosed.

If parentheses enclose a complete sentence, the other necessary punctuation goes inside; otherwise, the other punctuation goes outside.

He thought of traveling to France. (His brother lives in Paris.)

Phoebe White is definitely opposed to engaging in any new ventures (especially the oil merger); I think she will cancel her contracts.

---

## **QUOTATION MARKS “ ”**

---

Quotation marks are used to enclose quoted material. Only the exact words are placed inside quotation marks. Be sure to use a complete set: a pair at the beginning, a pair at the end. Don't use quotation marks to enclose an indirect quotation.

**He said, “I think Dan’s lying.”**

**He said he thought Dan was lying.**

Commas and periods are always placed inside quotation marks.

**“I wanted to go for a walk,” he said, “but it started to snow.”**

Colons and semicolons are always placed outside quotation marks.

**Jan said, “I’m going”; Pete said, “I’m not.”**

Place question marks and exclamation points inside quotation marks when they are part of the quoted material. Place them outside if they are part of the whole sentence.

Should I believe, "All that glitters is not gold"?

He asked, "Is Ella home?"

Use quotation marks around names of short works—poems, songs, short stories, etc. (Underline or italicize names of longer works—plays, books, newspapers, magazines, etc.)

"Trees"    "Yesterday"    "The Lottery"

Use quotation marks around nicknames, slang and colloquial expressions, foreign phrases and technical terms, but don't overdo it.

---

## THE HYPHEN —

---

## THE DASH —

---

Don't confuse the two of these:

Use a *hyphen* in certain compound words or at the end of a syllable when a word is too long to fit on a line. (Check your dictionary.)

Use a *dash* (twice as long as a hyphen) to indicate a sudden pause in a sentence. Use a set of dashes around a parenthetical expression. Don't overdo the use of the dash!

---

# ANSWERS

## Nouns (page 8)

### Common Nouns

1. notebook; pen; pencil
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. itinerary
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. district
7. workshop; basement
8. key
9. Summer; year
10. car

### Proper Nouns

1. Ellen
2. Rangers; Hawks
3. Al; Bumbling Bowling League
4. Mexico; Guatemala
5. Harold; Harriet
6. Republicans
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Mr. Evans
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. Pete's Garage

## Nouns (page 10)

- (1) Adams (2) Adamses (3) Adamses' [or Adams]  
(4) Adams'

## Pronouns (page 16)

1. She met them.
2. What did he think of it?
3. Where's her dog?
4. They want to go home.
5. Don't step on its tail.
6. We are friends of theirs.

### **Adjectives (page 19)**

1. a red-polka-dot
2. the largest
3. unconscious
4. a green silk
5. Three
6. This; impressive; the last
7. Purple; everyday
8. better
9. fat; dimpled

### **Verbs (page 26)**

1. swam
2. 's [is in *What's*] happening
3. Take
4. will reopen
5. should [in *shouldn't*] have done
6. is digging
7. ate
8. are; going; do
9. glitters is
10. 'd [had in *I'd*] known; was; would [in *wouldn't*] have seen

### **Verbs (page 29)**

- (1) runs (2) has run (3) ran (4) had [never] run (5) will run (6) will have run

### **Adverbs (page 32)**

1. beautifully
2. there tomorrow
3. more rapidly
4. exactly
5. here right now
6. almost
7. not very
8. later
9. Why; n't [not in *didn't*]; suddenly
10. happily ever after

### **Prepositions (page 36)**

1. onto
2. in
3. until
4. During
5. over; after

### **Conjunctions (page 37)**

1. and
2. so
3. Because
4. unless

## **Interjections (page 38)**

1. Nonsense
2. Ouch
3. Boy (The fourth word in the sentence. The second word in the sentence is a noun.)
4. What

## **Sentences (page 44)**

### *Subject*

1. Stephen
2. She
3. Mary and Ellen
4. Dinner
5. The highway
6. The door
7. We
  
8. Spring
9. (You)
10. The water

### *Predicate*

- played the part of the hero  
is a dancer  
are my aunts  
is getting cold  
is crowded  
is open  
went to the waterfall and  
ate lunch there  
is here  
hide inside  
is warm

## **Clauses (page 47)**

1. CD (compound sentence)
2. SS (simple sentence with a compound predicate)
3. SS (simple sentence with a compound subject)
4. CX (complex sentence)

## **Phrases (page 48)**

Only #2 and #3 are sentences.

## **Objects (page 50)**

### *Direct Object*

1. dinner
2. dog
3. door
4. rights

### *Indirect Object*

- me  
owner
- 

him

## HERE ARE OTHER DELL PURSE BOOKS YOU'LL ENJOY.

- 1837  Count Your Calories
- 0800  Brand-Name Calorie Counter
- 0806  Brand-Name Carbohydrate Gram Counter
- 1060  Carbohydrate Gram Counter
- 1853  Dictionary of Prescription Drugs
- 1875  Drs. Quick Weight Loss Diet
- 2440  Food and Drink Counter
- 2586  4th Book of Hairstyles
- 3792  How to Look Slimmer & Other Beauty Tips
- 6681  Over 40 Beauty Book
- 7320  Reducing Hips & Thighs
- 7421  Reducing Your Waist & Stomach
- 7719  T.V. Trivia Quiz
- 7822  Spot Reducing
- 8158  Smart Shopping with Coupons & Refunds (abridged)
- 8859  3500 Names for Baby
- 8577  3000 Uncommon Names for Baby
- 9313  Vitamin Counter
- 9654  Working Woman's Beauty Book
- 9589  Wigder's Guide to Over-the-Counter Drugs (abridged)
- 3463  Delphine's Household Hints
- 1529  Crossword Puzzle Dictionary
  - Crossword Puzzles #41, #42, #43, #44, #45, #46
  - Word Search #37, #38, #39, #40, #41, #42, #43
- 1358  Coins 1981
- 2461  Family Record Keeper
- 3154  Handwriting Analysis
- 3613  How To Organize Almost Everything
- 6549  Natural Birdscaping
- 8629  Teen Diets
- 9711  How to Prepare a Will
- 4824  Love Poetry
- 7024  Pencil Puzzles & Word Games #15
- 9033  Traveler's Handbook
- 1081  Complete Book of Hair Care & Styling
- 2897  Getting The Job
- 4473  Kids' Games
- 7201  Quickie Diets For Fast Weight Loss
- 4058  Instant Exercises
- 2554  50 Games of Solitaire
- 0871  Busy Homemakers' Diet & Exercise Program
- 7917  2nd Book of Mazes
- 6773  A New Figure in 30 Days
- 2144  Dress To Flatter Your Figure
- 1937  Dictionary of House Plants
- 3017  Grammar for Grown-Ups
- 6779  100 Gifts Under \$10
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